



Ambassador Marquardt spoke to around 70 business representatives at a breakfast organized by the American Chamber of Commerce on February 12. He explained the efforts of the diplomatic community to help resolve the current political crisis. He reiterated that the US government and other donors cannot accept an unconstitutional regime change, and noted that the solution has to come from a representative group of Malagasy, rather than the international community.

Breakfast participants expressed their concern that the politicians involved in the crisis were not considering the negative economic impacts caused by the political upheaval. The Ambassador suggested that AmCham, in conjunction with other local chambers of commerce, should voice their concerns publicly to draw attention to these negative impacts. Several export processing zone companies complained that they were already losing orders from the U.S. and lamented that, if the situation does not improve, thousands of factory workers could be unemployed within a few months.